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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER OCI# 1033/72
29 Dec, 1972Yugoslavs Seek To Smooth Troubled Waters With Austria

On 21 December, a Yugoslav official attempted to moderate Defense Minister Ljubicic's recent stinging remarks which alleged that Austria mistreated its Slovene minority. The official, however, restated Yugoslav dissatisfaction with the lack of vigilance by Austrian officials in protecting the rights of Slovenes living in Carinthia. On 15 December, Ljubicic had referred to a "campaign" being waged against "our minority" in Carinthia and he said that this serious situation must be considered when the military budget is discussed. The Austrians quickly reacted to this statement and called it "saber-rattling." Zupan claimed that Ljubicic's statement was only an "incidental mention" of the problem, had not been correctly reported in the press, and could not be interpreted as a threat to Austria.

Belgrade obviously wants to keep this issue before the public, as is shown by widespread media coverage of resolutions by various Republic organizations against the "anti-Slovene" campaign; but, given Yugoslav nationality sensitivities, it also wants to keep it under control. Meanwhile, the military is interested in using the situation to improve its chances of obtaining a larger budget, which this troubled economy can ill afford.

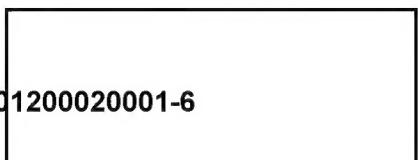
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